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## Message from the Mayor

I wanted to take a moment in this column to enlighten readers about my position on a new hospital east of the Anacostia River and on the topic of health care in the District.

Several weeks ago, I announced I had too many reservations about the National Capital Medical Center to continue supporting the project without an outside review. Therefore, I have appointed a task force to examine the NCMC proposal. This task force will also review whether there are viable alternatives to improve health care in a way that is fiscally sound and one that benefits the District's residents. I have appointed Gregg Pane, Director of the DC Health Department (DOH), to chair this task force, and have urged the task force to move quickly on this assignment. Our goal is to have a set of recommendations in-hand before July.

The mission of this task force is three-fold.

- First, it will focus on my commitment to improving the city's health care presence in East Washington, primarily by building a health care facility on Reservation 13. The panel will review what type of facility would best meet the needs of the community, including primary, specialty, and emergency care services. A full service hospital in the model of NCMC will be considered, but alternatives such as an ambulatory care center, urgent care center, and healthplex will also be examined.
- The task force will also identify the District's most pressing health care issues.
- Finally, the task force will develop recommendations to promote the financial stability of all existing District hospitals and to improve emergency room infrastructure.

We are all familiar with the high rates of chronic health conditions that affect our residents, such as hypertension, diabetes, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS. We are presented with a golden opportunity to use a large amount of money to expand health care services in the District and combat these growing problems.

The creation of a task force will give us greater insight on how to best meet these challenges in a timely manner, and I look forward to their results as we move forward on this issue.



## AGENCY WEBSITES

Department of Human  
Services

Office of Tax and  
Revenue

Department of Parks and  
Recreation

Department of  
Employment Services

Metropolitan Police  
Department

Office of Boards and  
Commissions

Commission on the Arts  
and Humanities

## LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and  
Tourism

DC Public Library

# The Interstate Highway System Is 50 Years Old

As many of our readers know, I'm a true history buff, so here's a friendly reminder that the District's Department of Transportation (DDOT) is marking the 50th anniversary of the Interstate Highway System with a special exhibition in the West Hall of Union Station.

The exhibit, entitled "The Interstate in the District of Columbia," is on display through May 6, 2006. It's free of charge and open to the public.

The exhibit features historic and current photographs, maps and documentation of the design and construction of the Interstate Highway System in the District from the collections of Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, the Eisenhower Presidential Library, the National Archives and the DDOT archives.

The District has played an important role in the construction of the Interstate system. The display includes information on the impact the Interstate had on the nation, President Eisenhower's reasons for backing and signing the legislation that created the Interstate system, and the important role of public input from DC citizens in shaping the Interstates in the District.

I encourage residents and visitors to stop by the exhibit to learn about the rich history behind this amazing engineering achievement. National and state-by-state activities are being held coast-to-coast to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Interstate Highway System, including a San Francisco-to-Washington, DC, convoy along I-80, slated for June 16-29.

For more information about the national celebration, please visit: [fhwa.dot.gov/interstate/homepage.cfm](http://fhwa.dot.gov/interstate/homepage.cfm).

## Ending Childhood Hunger in the District

The federal government estimates that 10 percent of District households suffer from hunger or have limited resources to consistently afford adequate nutrition. More than 68,000 residents, of whom approximately 35,000 are children, are living on the edge of hunger in our great city. This is not acceptable.

This is why last week I announced that I'm launching a 10-year campaign to end childhood hunger in the District of Columbia to tackle this pressing issue. This campaign includes a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to eliminating child hunger in the District.

In 2003, I created a Blue Ribbon Panel on Child Nutrition which issued clear recommendations on improving child nutrition in the city. The Blue Ribbon Panel was a success, and this campaign takes those recommendations and my commitment another step further. Along with the Commission on Food and Nutrition that I re-established in 2005, more than 150 leaders representing 13 different sectors from the city have come together to design a comprehensive plan to end childhood hunger in the District.

Our State Education Office (SEO) is already making progress on our summer meals program. During the summer of 2005, more than 1.2 million meals were served, a seven percent increase over the prior year. We hope to continue this trend in conjunction with the new citywide campaign.

The bottom line is that low-income children in our city have not been getting enough healthy food to eat on a regular basis. I am pleased about this partnership and how it builds on our city's commitment to ensure low-income children and their families get the nutrition and food they need for the long term.

For more information about the partnership to end childhood hunger in our city, please visit: [dchunger.org](http://dchunger.org).



BRC Alerts

DCLMPC Partnership  
Works!

DCOA Spotlight on Aging

DHS Outreach

DISB DC Financial  
Gateway Express

OAG Inter Alia...

OAPIA Updates

OPGD Grant Funding  
Alerts

## Welcoming a New Retailer to the District

The District of Columbia is becoming a giant magnet for retail stores wanting to enter a vibrant, booming city. Two months ago, we opened the first Bed Bath & Beyond in the Nation's Capital. Recently, I was pleased to announce our latest retail partner located in downtown DC—West Elm.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the store, West Elm is a home furnishings store – a component of the Williams Sonoma Company. There are currently 14 West Elm stores across the country, including one at Tyson's Corner in Northern Virginia. Customers will be able to walk in and shop for furniture, accessories, or gifts for their homes.

At 37,000 square feet, the Washington, DC store will be the largest store in the chain and its flagship location on the East Coast. It will take up the entire ground level and second floor of the G Street side of the historic downtown Woodies building. The build-out of the new store will respect all of the historic elements of the Woodies interior and exterior. When the new store opens in January, we anticipate sales of \$500 per square foot that will also attract other new and exciting retail to the F Street corridor.

We are truly a magnet for developers, investors, and unique retailers like West Elm. The historic nature of the Woodies building and the store's hip design reflect our city and its expanding retail environment.

For more information about West Elm, please visit [westelm.com](http://westelm.com).

## Building a New Central Library in the District's Downtown

On April 22, I was pleased to testify during a town hall meeting on the topic of libraries, held by Councilmember Kathy Patterson, Chairman of the Committee on Education, Libraries, and Recreation.

Over the past eight years, we've made significant progress in improving government services, managing our finances responsibly, and harnessing the building boom in our city to benefit District residents. However, the District is still plagued with economic and educational disparities across our city – disparities that we cannot afford to ignore.

Strengthening our library system is crucial if we are to resolve these disparities. We must improve educational attainment and literacy at all ages by providing programs that encourage children to discover the love of reading and assist adults who want to gain greater literacy skills.

We must also create state-of-the art, 21st century libraries where residents across this city can easily access the latest computers, computer software, and other media in order to help bridge the digital and literacy divide. This makes the role of public libraries even more relevant today than 30 years ago.

To get there, we must reconfigure our libraries into literacy hubs and transform them into places that entice children after school is over. We must transform neighborhood libraries into activity magnets and true community and cultural treasures, where people of all ages and backgrounds can explore, to learn and share.

Simply put, we must embark on a major effort to transform our public library system, and a new central library must be a central part of this transformation. The transformation of the library system begins with building or rebuilding their central library, which has proven in other cities to be the engine that pulls the whole system forward.

A new central library will serve as the administrative, technological and collections hub to all neighborhood branches. Today, our existing MLK Library provides only minimal support to our branches. The rebirth of the central library, as we have seen elsewhere, will be the first step in rebuilding the entire neighborhood branch system.

The new Martin Luther King Memorial Library will be located in what will be our most dynamic and alluring mixed-use neighborhood on the site of the former Washington convention center.



## District Activities



Mayor Williams delivers remarks at the National Zoo for the launch of GreenDC Week 2006.



Mayor Williams presents the key to the city and a lifetime achievement award to Dr. Dorothy Height, Chairman Emeritus of the National Council of Negro Women, as part of Emancipation Day festivities.



Mayor Williams delivers remarks at the Kennedy Recreation Center in Northwest.

## Community News

- [Mayor to Appoint Task Force to Review Sunday Parking Regulations](#)
- [Mayor Williams Lauds Nationals Manager Frank Robinson on 1000th Victory](#)
- [Mayor Williams Signs Metro Funding Legislation](#)

## Upcoming Events

[View All](#) [News Releases](#)

<b>4/19– 4/30</b>	<b>Filmfest DC</b> Movie theaters throughout the District
<b>4/28</b>	<b>Pandemic Flu Summit</b> 8:30 am–4:30 pm Kellogg Conference Center 800 Florida Avenue, NE
<b>4/29</b>	<b>Spring Community Planting at Fort Dupont Park</b> 9 am–1 pm Fort Dupont Park Randle Circle and Minnesota Avenue, SE
<b>5/4</b>	<b>South Capitol Street Project Public Meeting</b> 6 pm–8:30 pm Van Ness Elementary School 1150 5th Street SE
<b>5/6</b>	<b>Shaw Open House</b> 11 am–4 pm Kennedy Recreation Center 1401 Seventh Street, NW

